

Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriations Act, FY 1996

October 3, 1995

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1817, the "Military Construction Appropriations Act, FY 1996," which provides funding for military construction and family housing programs of the Department of Defense.

I am pleased that the Act provides my full request for the vast majority of military construction projects, the military family housing program, other quality of life facilities for our military personnel and their families, and the Defense Department base closure and realignment program. Especially noteworthy, the bill funds my request for the Defense Department Family Housing Improvement Fund, which will give the Department a new vehicle for acquiring and improving military housing and supporting facilities more quickly and at lower cost than with conventional funding and acquisition methods.

Although I am disappointed that the Act provides more funding than requested, most of the unrequested appropriations are for legitimate defense requirements. Funding was provided in FY 1996 rather than in future years.

I am concerned, however, that Congress has chosen to spend \$70 million on unneeded

projects. The Defense Department has not identified these projects as priorities, and they will not help improve the quality of life for our service members. These projects are clear examples of why the President needs line-item veto authority. The taxpayers deserve protection from this kind of wasteful spending, and if I had the line-item veto, I would use it to strike this \$70 million. Unfortunately, Congress still has not completed action on legislation to provide the President with line-item veto authority. The American people have waited long enough. I strongly urge the Congress to complete action on line-item veto legislation now so I can eliminate wasteful spending this year.

The American people sent us here to change the way Washington does business. Passing the line-item veto would be a good place for this Congress to start.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 3, 1995.

NOTE: H.R. 1817, approved October 3, was assigned Public Law No. 104-32.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill, FY 1996

October 3, 1995

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning today without my approval H.R. 1854, the "Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill, FY 1996."

H.R. 1854 is, in fact, a disciplined bill, one that I would sign under different circumstances. But, at this point, Congress has completed action on only two of the 13 FY 1996 appropriations bills: this one and H.R. 1817, the Military Construction appropriations bill. Thus, the vast majority of Federal activities lack final FY 1996 funding and are operating under a short-term continuing resolution.

I appreciate the willingness of Congress to work with my Administration to produce an acceptable short-term continuing resolution before completing action on the regular, full-year appropriations bills for FY 1996. I believe, however, that it would be inappropriate to provide full-year regular funding for Congress and its offices while funding for most other activities of Government remains incomplete, unresolved, and uncertain.

As I said two months ago, I don't think Congress should take care of its own business before it takes care of the people's business. I stated